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The Covenant Of The Goddess

Anon

Purpose

The Covenant of the Goddess was founded in 1975 to increase cooperation among Witches, and to secure for Witches and covens the legal protection enjoyed by members of other religions.

Functions

The Covenant publishes a newsletter; issues ministerial credentials on request to qualified persons; sponsors a national festival each summer; and encourages networking nationally, as well as regionally through local councils.

Structure

The Covenant is incorporated as a non-profit religious organization in California, though it has grown to be a nationwide organization. It is a confederation of covens and solitaires of various traditions, who share in the worship of the Goddess and the Old Gods and subscribe to a common code of ethics. The Covenant holds a Grand Council annually to elect national officers, set a budget, and decide matters which require deliberation by the full membership. Decisions are usually made by consensus.

Code Of Ethics

- An ye harm none, do as ye will.
- Since our religion and arts and practices peculiar to it are the gift of the Goddess, membership and training in a local coven or tradition are bestowed free, as gifts, and only on those persons who are deemed worthy to receive them. However, a coven may expect each of its members to bear a fair share of its ordinary operating expenses.
- All persons have the right to charge reasonable fees for the services by which they earn a living, so long as our religion is not thereby exploited.
- Every person associated with this Covenant shall respect the autonomy and sovereignty of each coven, as well as the right of each coven to oversee the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical development of its members and students in its own way, and shall exercise reasonable caution against infringing upon that right in any way.

- Members of this Covenant shall respect the traditional secrecy of our religion.
- Members of this Covenant should ever keep in mind the underlying unity of our religion as well as the diversity of its manifestations.
- These ethics shall be understood and interpreted in light of one another, and especially in light of the traditional laws of our religion.

Confidentiality

All information give to the Covenant of the Goddess or any of its officials is considered strictly confidential, unless you indicate otherwise. No information about members is published or given out without explicit written permission. Direct access to the Covenant's mailing list is limited to the Board of Directors. Maximum privacy is assured.

Newsletter

At every Sabbat the Covenant publishes a newsletter of Craft and Pagan news, original articles, poetry, humor, rituals and announcements. Member covens receive the newsletter automatically. Individual coveners and non-members who donate a suitable tax-deductible gift will also be placed on the mailing list, to receive the newsletter and other mailings. Circulation is limited to members and friends of the Covenant.

Finances

An annual membership tithe is set every year by the Grand Council to cover bare expenses, based on the previous year's expenses and any projected cost increases. The annual financial statement is published in the newsletter. Other activities are supported by fund-raising.

All contributions to the Covenant of the Goddess are greatly appreciated and are tax-deductible.

Applying For Membership

Any Goddess-supporting coven or solitaire can be eligible for membership in the Covenant of the Goddess if certain criteria and requirements are met. All inquiries into membership should be sent to the National Credentials Officer. If the coven or solitaire is in an area near a local council, the National Officer will forward the inquiry to the local Credentials Officer, who will respond. A member can apply in person at a council meeting, or by filling out the appropriate form and sending it in with the initial membership tithe.

General Criteria For Coven Membership

- Generally focus theology and ritual, etc., around worship of the Goddess and the Old Gods (or the Goddess alone).
- Believe and follow a code of ethics compatible with that of the Covenant.
- Have been meeting monthly or oftener for at least six months.
- Have three more members who have been formally accepted into the clergy.
- Be a cohesive, self-perpetuating group.

Requirements For Membership

Full Membership: The applicant must be recommended without reservation by two active members of the Covenant.

Provisional Membership: The applicant may be recommended by one member; and then within a year and a day make a viable effort to get to know other members, in order to achieve Full Member status.

The appropriate Credentials Officer (National or local) shall verify information regarding criteria and credentials.

Coven-At-Large

This is the term we use to represent the many Witches who are solitaires, i.e. practicing alone. Each local council may devise its own standards for admission of coveners-at-large, in harmony with national guidelines.

Local Councils

A local council is a smaller branch of the Covenant, consisting of at least three member covens of at least two different traditions, in reasonably close geographic proximity to each other. The local councils generally meet more often than the national organization. They may initiate independent projects, sponsor local festivals and workshops, and generally work together for common goals close to home. As the Covenant continues to grow, we encourage new member covens close to one another to form their own local councils.

Voting

When a matter requiring a decision is presented before the Covenant in council, it is discussed by the members in attendance until a consensus is reached. If a consensus cannot be reached, then a vote is taken. A coven holding a current Full Membership is entitled to one vote. Each such coven also holds the power to veto, though this is exercised only in extreme cases. A coven with Provisional Membership is entitled to one vote, but does not hold veto power.

A coven-at-large is entitled to one vote if, and only if, three individuals are physically present at the council and unanimous in their choice of vote.

Ministerial Credentials

In order to receive Ministerial Credentials as a Priestess or Priest, a person shall:

1. Be an active member of a coven which is a Full Member of the Covenant.
2. Have been "confirmed" to taking on the full commitment to the requirements of that coven's Tradition of our religion.
3. Have undergone at least a full year of active training for the ministry of that Tradition.

These credentials shall remain valid only so long as the person remains an active member of the coven which remains an active member of the Covenant.

In order to be eligible to receive Ministerial Credentials as an Elder, a person shall:

1. Satisfy (2.) and (3.) above.
2. Have undergone an additional full year of active training for the ministry.
3. Be fully able to form a coven, admit members, and train them in the tenets and practices of that Tradition.

These credentials shall remain valid for life, unless specifically revoked, so long as the person remains in contact with the Covenant.

The National Festival

The annual Grand Council or national business meeting is held as part of a national festival, which is open to the whole membership as well as Pagans and Witches who are not part of the Covenant. The festival is usually held at a secluded campground or resort, and moves to a different area of the country each summer. In addition to the council meeting, the program includes workshops on magick and the Craft, concerts, a potluck feast, a talent show, and the opportunity to purchase (or barter for) art, crafts and ritual tools by Pagan artisans. Registration information is available in the newsletter.

For More Information

Write to: Covenant of the Goddess, P.O. Box 1226, Berkeley, CA 94704.

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Quote of the moment:

If your face were a tree, it would be different.

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